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FIRST BATCH OF RAFALE JETS SET TO ARRIVE BY JULY 27

In light of the heightened tensions in Ladakh, India has asked France to speed up the delivery of the jets, say sources

MAJOR BOOST FOR INDIA'S AIR POWER

Experts say the induction of the new jets will ramp up India's air combat capabilities. They are capable of carrying advanced weapons, including Meteor, a European active radar-guided air-to-air missile that can strike down enemy targets from a distance of 100 km. The first batch of the jets will be stationed at Ambala Airbase in Haryana

JETS TO COME WITH RANGE OF FEATURES

- The jet will come with additional features sought by India including helmet-mounted displays, radar warning receivers, low-band jammers and infra-red search and tracking systems
- India had signed an agreement with France in 2016 to purchase 36 Rafale fighter jets at a cost of around ₹58,000 crore

30

OF THE 36 JETS WILL BE USED FOR COMBAT. THE REST FOR TRAINING

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Unlock 2.0: Air, rail services to open further

No major relaxations announced; Schools, colleges, Metros, cinemas, gyms will continue to remain closed

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @New Delhi

APART from announcing further expansion of air and rail services in a calibrated manner, the guidelines for Unlock 2.0 unveiled by the Union Home Ministry on Monday did not have any major relaxations.

Domestic flights and passenger trains have already been allowed in a limited way. Their operations will be further expanded in a calibrated manner. "International air travel of passengers, which has been permitted in a limited manner under the Vande Bharat mission, to be further opened up in a calibrated manner," the ministry said.

However, cinema halls, Metro services, gymnasiums, swimming pools, and theatres will remain shut during Unlock 2.0, between July 1 and July 31. Educational institutions, including schools and colleges, too, will also remain closed till July 31. However, online classes will continue.

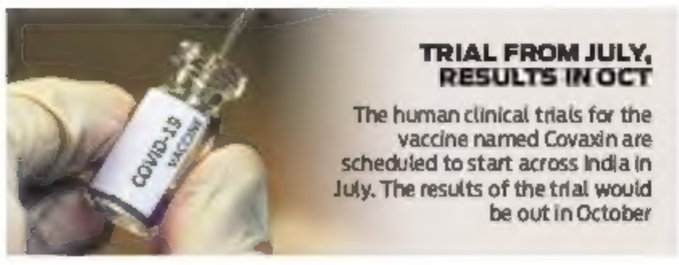
Night curfew timings have been relaxed further. Curfew shall now be in force from 10 pm to 5 am, instead of 9 pm to 5 am. Relaxation in night curfew will help in seamless operation of industrial units in multiple shifts, movement of persons and goods on national and state highways, loading and unloading of cargo and movement of persons to their destinations after disembarking from buses, trains and flights.

Shops, depending upon their area, can have more than five persons at a time, provided they maintain adequate physical distancing. Training institutions of the Central and state governments will be allowed to function with effect from July 15. "SOP in this regard will be issued by the Department of Personnel and Training, Government of India," the ministry said.

The Centre said the guidelines were framed after extensive consultation with states and UTs. As for containment zones, the advisory said: "Lockdown shall continue to be implemented strictly in the containment zones till July 31."

PM'S ADDRESS TO THE NATION TODAY

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will address the nation on Tuesday at 4 pm, his office said. There was no word though on the subject of his address



TRIAL FROM JULY, RESULTS IN OCT

The human clinical trials for the vaccine named Covaxin are scheduled to start across India in July. The results of the trial would be out in October

India's first vaccine candidate set to begin human trials

V NILESH @Hyderabad

HYDERABAD-BASED vaccine manufacturer Bharat Biotech has been accorded permission by the Drug Controller General of India (DCGI) to initiate Phase I & II human clinical trials for India's first vaccine candidate against Covid-19. The vaccine has been developed and manufactured at the company's Bio-safety Level-III high containment facility at Genome Valley in the city.

The human clinical trials are scheduled to start across India in July 2020. Results are expected to be out by October 2020, following which larger clinical trials will be conducted.

The indigenously developed vaccine has been named 'Covaxin', and is an inactivated vaccine. It has been developed after National Institute of Virology, Pune, isolated a strain of the Novel Coronavirus, known as SARS-CoV-2 and transferred it to the company.

The permission for human clinical trials was granted by DCGI after the company submitted results generated from preclinical studies, demonstrating safety and immune response. Dr Krishna Ella, Chairman and Managing Director, Bharat Biotech, said, "We are proud to announce Covaxin, India's first indigenous vaccine against Covid-19. The collaboration with ICMR and NIV was instrumental in the development of this vaccine. The proactive support and guidance from CDSCO have enabled approvals for this project."

According to a media release by Bharat Biotech, the company accelerated its objective in completing the comprehensive preclinical studies by expediting the national regulatory protocols.

Results from these studies have been promising and show extensive safety and effective immune responses, it said.

Suchitra Ella, Joint Managing Director, Bharat Biotech, said, "We are committed to advancing vaccine development as a matter of national importance to demonstrate India's strength in handling future pandemics."

What is an inactivated vaccine? The process involves growing the virus on a large scale and killing/inactivating the virus with a chemical. Once the vaccine is injected into a human, it has no potential to infect or replicate, since it is a killed virus. It helps the immune system mount an antibody response towards virus.

KARNATAKA COVID-19 BATTLE

1,105 TEST POSITIVE ON MONDAY

TOTAL CASES 14,295

226 Total Deaths

7,683 Total Recoveries so far

- 19 people succumb to the disease in the state during the day
- Bengaluru Urban again tops districts' daily tally at 738 cases
- 1 per cent of the state's population tested for Covid-19 so far
- FULL COVERAGE P4

BIG SPIKE IN COVID CASES IN JULY-AUGUST: MINISTER

ANUSHA RAVI @Bengaluru

FRONTLINE workers in Karnataka have been asked to mentally prepare themselves to handle the Covid-19 crisis for the next six months. Revenue Minister R Ashoka, who has temporarily been handed charge of Covid management in Bengaluru, on Monday said that in keeping with the global trend, Karnataka and Bengaluru will see a spike in Coronavirus cases in July-August. He attributed the prediction to an expert committee report.

He admitted that increased spread of infection, and not just stepped-up testing, is causing the spike. Asked if the state is mulling more stringent lockdown measures, he said that CM B S Yediyurappa will take a decision after July 7 as the government does not want to inconvenience SSLC students.

Following a meeting, Yediyurappa convinced private hospitals to transfer 50% of beds to the government, which expects to get 2,000 additional beds for Covid treatment. A five-member team, headed by Political Secretary to CM S R Vishwanath, will coordinate with private hospitals. The team will include two IAS officers, Tushar Girinath and Pankaj Kumar Pandey, and two members of Private Hospitals And Nursing Homes' Association – Dr R Ravindra and Dr Nagendra Swamy.

"Beds in all private and government hospitals set aside for Covid treatment will be numbered. We will link bed numbers to patient numbers, and when a patient is discharged we can track the availability of beds real time. All the staff have been told to wear name and designation badges. All staffers, including doctors, have to log their duty time," he said. The government is also thinking of services increasing the salaries of frontline workers.

Ashoka announced a contingency plan for Bengaluru that included setting up a 20-bed ICU facility at Shantinagar Hospital, scaling up beds in isolation centres and Covid care centres, allowing Victoria Hospital to hire six ambulances for the next six months, hiring 85 AYUSH and Dental doctors as assistants on contract basis for BBMP, deputing newly appointed tahsildars of the Revenue Department to oversee setting up of new hospitals and facilities as observers, allotting two hearses for each zone, identifying and authorising 10 NGO workers in each ward to help shift positive persons to designated centres, sanitisation of localities and awareness programs.

On Monday, the Revenue Department passed orders deputing 64 probationary tahsildars to BBMP. Ashoka said that Girinath will be in charge of bed allotment, while Rajendra Kumar Kataria will take care of Covid bed centre. A meeting of Bengaluru corporators will also be called at the BBMP headquarters. "The corporators will be made responsible for supply of food, essentials etc to residences or roads sealed in each ward," he said.

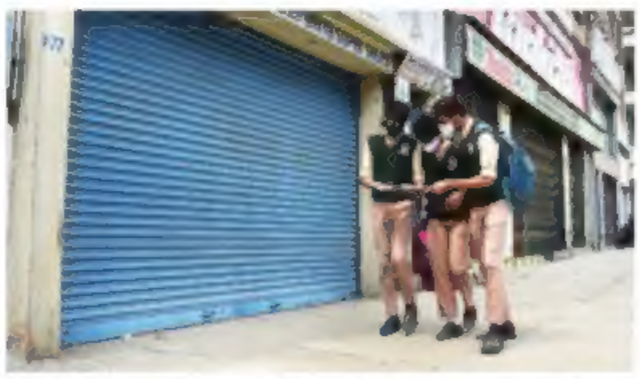
FUNDS SPENT

₹742cr Available to state under SDRF

₹380cr Spent on Covid management

₹232cr given to DCs

₹70 cr to Health Department
₹50 cr to BBMP
₹13 cr to Railways
₹12 cr to Home Dept
₹ 2.89 cr to BMTC



School students catch up after finishing their science paper of the ongoing SSLC examination in Bengaluru on Monday | VINOD KUMAR T

Corps Commanders meet today to discuss LAC issue

MAYANK SINGH @New Delhi

WITH the Corps Commander-level meeting on June 22 failing to make any headway in resolving the Sino-Indian stand-off along the Line of Actual Control (LAC), a fresh round of talks between them will be held on Tuesday. "Corps Commanders' meeting will be held tomorrow (Tuesday) at Chushul on the Indian side," government sources said. It is slated to begin at 10.30 am.

The first two Corps Commander-level meetings on June 6 and 22 were held at Moldo, which is on the Chinese side of the LAC. The Indian delegation will be led by 14 Corps Commander Lt Gen Harinder Singh and China will be represented by its South Xinjiang Military Division Corps Commander Major General Lin Liu.

The June 22 meet was held a week after bloody clashes between soldiers of both sides near Patrolling Point 14 in the Galwan Valley area resulted in 20 Indian casualties.

The Chinese have been dragging their feet on disengagement. Also, while talks were on, the Chinese side continued increasing their build-up, adding to trust deficit.

In complete breach of agreements for tranquility on the border, the Chinese have moved into various areas starting from the Northern Bank of the Pangong Tso to Depsang, with Hot Spring Area and the Galwan Valley in between. Chinese troops are at Finger-4, Gogra Post (Patrolling Point 17A), Patrolling Points 14 and 15, and at the Y-Junction in Depsang.

The Y-Junction is an outlet for Indian patrolling parties and covers Patrol Points 10, 11, 11A and 12. In all, about 80 sqkm has been affected by Chinese ingress. P9

Indian Axe Effect on 59 Chinese apps

KUMAR VIKRAM @New Delhi

AMID tensions between India and China, the Ministry of Information Technology on Monday banned 59 mobile apps, saying they are engaged in activities that are prejudicial to the sovereignty and integrity of India, defence of India, security of state and public order.

The list has many popular apps, including TikTok, Shareit, and Camscanner.

Emphasising that there have been raging concerns on the aspects relating to data security and safeguarding privacy, the ministry said, "Such concerns also pose a threat to sovereignty and security of our country."

Recently, the Railways decided to terminate a signalling contract worth ₹471 crore awarded to a Chinese company in 2016. Besides, Bihar cancelled a tender for construction of a new bridge because two of the four selected contractors had Chinese partners. Moreover, RSS-affiliate Swadeshi Jagran Manch and many trader associations have given a 'Boycott China' call.

EXCLUSIVE TO EXPRESS

'We shouldn't let our guard down against the pandemic'

B S YEDIYURAPPA

EVER since the Centre recognised Karnataka as a role model in the war against Covid-19, I feel proud and, equally overwhelmed with a motive to be the best in the days to come.

Rajesh Bhushan, IAS, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, in a letter to the health ministries of all the states, urged them to consider the practices of Karnataka and replicate them for the better management of the pandemic. The Centre believes the comprehensive contact tracing of the positive cases and physical/phone-based household survey as 'worth replicating' in the country.

Our officers and Corona Warriors richly deserve the recognition for their relentless service. The appreciation has infused my team and me with renewed energy to tackle the situation.

The entire globe is gripped by the scourge of the Covid-19 pandemic. No country is in a position to help the other.

The 12th century reformer, Basavanna's poignant *vachana* aptly describes the current state of affairs of the world.

If the hearth is on fire, one can stand,
What if the world is on fire, can you withstand?
What if the lake drinks the water,
What if the fence grazes the field,
What if the lady steals in her own house,
What if the mother's milk kills as poison,
to whom can I complain, oh Divine of Kudalasangama!

Yet, we have had a strategy in place to overcome the menace. A multi-pronged strategy – technical, humanitarian approach and medical support – dominated the initial phase.

From the very initial stages, we have had a high-tech war room in the BBMP, Information Department and Labour Department, the first of its kind in India, to monitor, exchange information and keep a tab on the spread of the coronavirus.

The second and crucial aspect of the strategy was to manage the economic health of the state. The administration wasn't only focused on containing the spread of the pandemic, but also addressed the economic distress of the working class.

(The writer is the Chief Minister of Karnataka)

CONTINUED ON: P9

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